



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 178

February Session, 2016

House Bill No. 5290

House of Representatives, March 24, 2016

The Committee on Aging reported through REP. SERRA of the 33rd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the bill ought to pass.

**AN ACT INCREASING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR
GRANDPARENTS AND OTHER NONPARENT RELATIVES WHO ARE
RAISING CHILDREN.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Subsection (a) of section 17b-112 of the general statutes is
2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*
3 *1, 2016*):

4 (a) (1) The Department of Social Services shall administer a
5 temporary family assistance program under which cash assistance
6 shall be provided to eligible families in accordance with the temporary
7 assistance for needy families program, established pursuant to the
8 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of
9 1996. The Commissioner of Social Services may operate portions of the
10 temporary family assistance program as a solely state-funded
11 program, separate from the federal temporary assistance for needy
12 families program, if the commissioner determines that doing so will
13 enable the state to avoid fiscal penalties under the temporary

14 assistance for needy families program. Families receiving assistance
15 under the solely state-funded portion of the temporary family
16 assistance program shall be subject to the same conditions of eligibility
17 as those receiving assistance under the federal temporary assistance for
18 needy families program. Under the temporary family assistance
19 program, benefits shall be provided to a family for not longer than
20 twenty-one months, except as provided in subsections (b) and (c) of
21 this section. For the purpose of calculating said twenty-one-month
22 time limit, months of assistance received on and after January 1, 1996,
23 pursuant to time limits under the aid to families with dependent
24 children program, shall be included. For purposes of this section,
25 "family" means one or more individuals who apply for or receive
26 assistance together under the temporary family assistance program. If
27 the commissioner determines that federal law allows individuals not
28 otherwise in an eligible covered group for the temporary family
29 assistance program to become covered, such family may also, at the
30 discretion of the commissioner, be composed of [(1)] (A) a pregnant
31 woman, or [(2)] (B) a parent, both parents or other caretaker relative
32 and at least one child who is under the age of eighteen, or who is
33 under the age of nineteen and a full-time student in a secondary school
34 or its equivalent. A caretaker relative shall be related to the child or
35 children by blood, marriage or adoption or shall be the legal guardian
36 of such a child or pursuing legal proceedings necessary to achieve
37 guardianship. If the commissioner elects to allow state eligibility
38 consistent with any change in federal law, the commissioner may
39 administratively transfer any qualifying family cases under the cash
40 assistance portion of the state-administered general assistance
41 program to the temporary family assistance program without regard
42 to usual eligibility and enrollment procedures. If such families become
43 an ineligible coverage group under the federal law, the commissioner
44 shall administratively transfer such families back to the cash assistance
45 portion of the state-administered general assistance program without
46 regard to usual eligibility and enrollment procedures to the degree that
47 such families are eligible for the state program.

48 (2) To the extent permissible under federal law, the payment

49 standard for a family that receives assistance under the temporary
50 family assistance program pursuant to this section and in which the
51 head of the household is a nonparent caretaker relative and the legal
52 guardian of a child shall be equal to seventy-five per cent of the
53 applicable monthly foster care rate paid by the Department of
54 Children and Families for children of the same number and needs.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	July 1, 2016	17b-112(a)
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AGE *Joint Favorable*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 17 \$	FY 18 \$
Social Services, Dept.	GF - Cost	\$6.1 million to \$30.5 million	\$6.1 million to \$30.5 million

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill will result in a cost to the Department of Social Services' (DSS), Temporary Family Assistance Program (TFA) to increase the payment standard for child only assistance units' rate to 75% of a foster care rate. The bill does not specify which category of foster care reimbursement rate the TFA payment standard will be indexed to. Assuming the minimum and the median monthly foster care rate, the bill will result in an increased annual cost to the DSS of between \$6.1 and \$30.5 million. The table below reflects the average monthly rates:

	Average Monthly Rate¹
TFA Rate	\$483
Foster Care Rate- Minimum	\$772
Foster Care Rate- Median	\$1,289

The actual cost will depend on two factors (1) the number of individuals impacted and (2) the amount of the monthly foster care reimbursement.

¹ Foster care rates reflect the average FY 16 monthly foster care rates as of February 2016. Monthly foster care rates range from \$772 to \$10,651. TFA rates reflect the projected average cost per case for FY 17. Estimates are based on projected TFA cases in FY 17 and assume, based on historical information, that 33% are child only assistance units.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to (1) the number of individuals impacted and (2) the amount of the monthly foster care reimbursement.

OLR Bill Analysis**HB 5290*****AN ACT INCREASING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR GRANDPARENTS AND OTHER NONPARENT RELATIVES WHO ARE RAISING CHILDREN.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill generally increases the Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) payment to certain families. To receive the new rate, a family's head of household must be a nonparent caretaker relative (e.g., grandparent or aunt) and the child's legal guardian.

TFA payments vary by family size and region, while foster care rates vary by a child's age and medical condition. The bill changes the TFA payment to 75% of the applicable monthly foster care rate a family would receive from the Department of Children and Families for fostering the same child or children. As a result, the bill eliminates regional variation in payments to these families.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2016

BACKGROUND***TFA***

TFA is administered by the Department of Social Services (DSS) and provides cash payments and other assistance to families meeting specific income and other requirements. Generally, DSS calculates TFA benefit amounts by subtracting total countable income (e.g., unearned income) from payment standards. (DSS may increase the payment standards for families with special needs.) DSS disregards earned income for purposes of benefit calculation up to 100% of the federal poverty level (FPL). Once earnings reach the FPL, the family becomes ineligible for assistance.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Aging Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 13 Nay 0 (03/08/2016)